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ABSTRACT

The status of speech education in all United States two-year colleges is discussed. Both public and private schools are examined. Two separate studies were conducted, each utilizing the same procedure. The specific aspects with which the research was concerned were: (1) availability of speech courses, (2) departmentalization of speech courses, (3) specific speech courses available, and (4) instructional speech staff. A questionnaire was mailed to each of the two-year colleges registered with the American Association of Junior Colleges. The data were analyzed in terms of three major variables: (1) the geographical area in which the school was located, (2) the public or private nature of the school, and (3) the size of the school. Results include: (1) Some speech course(s) is offered in 93% of the responding schools; (2) Twenty-seven per cent of the schools offering speech courses require a course for all students; (3) Speech courses are offered under the auspices of the English Department in 35% of the responding schools; (4) Sixty-eight per cent of the teachers teaching speech courses hold advanced degrees in some phase of that field; and (5) The remaining 32% hold a graduate degree in another discipline or have no advanced degree at all. (CK)

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A SURVEY OF SPEECH EDUCATION IN UNITED STATES

TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

A paper
prepared for the annual convention of the
Speech Communication Association
San Francisco, California
December 27, 1971

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The two-year college has become a distinctive and expanding form of higher education in the United States. Mr. Jack Gernhart, Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director of the American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC), stated the reasons for this when he wrote:

> Contributing factors are increasing numbers of high school graduates; growth in the percentage of college-age persons who are seeking college opportunities; rapid expansion of curriculum and career education opportunities within the two-year colleges; the increasing popularity of adult, continuing education, and community service programs; and stepped up recruitment of disadvantaged and minority students.[1]

In spite of the significance of the two-year college as an educational institution, comparatively little research has been done in the area of speech curriculum and/or activities within the junior colleges. That which has been completed tends to focus only on certain aspects of speech in these institutions, examine the situation on public schools only, or confine itself to a limited geographical region. In a 1971 EdD dissertation, Roy M. Berko cites the need for comprehensive research by alluding to the comments of prominent educators.[2]

This paper concerns itself with the comprehensive problem: the status of speech education in all United States two-year colleges. To the knowledge of the author, it is the only study of this type since the 1930s. In order to provide this comprehensive perspective, the author examined both the public and private schools. Hopefully this information will help to fill the gap described by Dr. Berko and other colleagues.

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1. William A. Harper (ed.), 1970 Junior College Directory (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges with assistance from the Research Division, National Education Association, 1970), 9.

2. Roy M. Berko, "Speech Programs at Coeducational Community-Junior Colleges." (unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Pennsylvania State University, 1971).

PROCEDURE

This paper concerns two separate studies conducted by the author. One was done in May, 1967, and the second in April, 1971. The same procedure was utilized in both studies. The specific aspects with which the research was concerned were:

(1) Availability of speech courses

(2) Departmentalization of speech courses

(3) Specific speech courses available

(4) Instructional speech staff

These studies were conducted by means of a questionnaire mailed to each of the two-year colleges registered with the American Association of Junior Colleges. In the earlier study, the 1967 Directory of the AAJC was used; in the later study, the 1970 Directory provided the necessary information. In 1967, 65 per cent of the 837 total questionnaires were returned in usable form. In 1971, 55 per cent of the 1038 total questionnaires were usable. These were analyzed with computer assistance to yield normative data.

The data were analyzed in terms of three major variables:

(1) The geographical area in which the school was located

(2) The public or private nature of the school

(3) The size of the school

The remainder of the paper is devoted to a summation of the conclusions reached in each study. The reader is reminded that the information presented is representative only of the usable replies of the responding schools. The data reflect the conditions in those schools during the time period indicated and no attempt is made to generalize to the remainder of the two-year colleges.

GENERAL RESULTS OF THE 1967 STUDY (1966-67 SCHOOL YEAR)

Responses to the 1967 study were received in usable form from 546 of the 837 schools.

On the basis of the results, it was shown that some speech course(s) is offered in 93 per cent of the responding schools. Three per cent of the schools include speech as a part of another course of study; 4 per cent offer no speech courses at all.

Twenty-seven per cent of the schools offering speech courses require a course for all students. Thirty-six per cent require it for some students; in 37 per cent of the schools, speech is not required for anyone.

Speech courses are offered under the auspices of the English Department in 35 per cent of the responding schools. There is an area with a Speech Department label in 26 per cent of the schools. The remaining institutions departmentalize whatever speech courses they offer under many different labels.

The next area to be considered is that of the faculty. Sixty-three per cent of the schools employ one or more full-time teachers of speech courses. The average number per school is 2.06. There are 623 part-time teachers employed either as the only speech teachers or as a supplement to the full-time faculty in 62 per cent of the schools.

Of the 1333 teachers reported as teaching speech courses on either a full or part-time basis in the junior colleges, 68 per cent hold advanced degrees in some phase of that field. Of this total, 62 per cent hold MA/MS degrees and 6 per cent hold doctoral degrees. The remaining 32 per cent of the teachers either hold a graduate degree in another discipline (usually English) or have no advanced degree at all. The latter is the case in 111 schools.

For presentation at this Convention, the course offerings were analyzed and courses offered in over 30 per cent of the responding colleges are presented. In 1967, the situation was as follows:

Course Title	% Schools Offering	Av. No. Students/Section
Beginning Speech	.89	23.3
Oral Interpretation	.37	18.6
Intro. to Theatre	.36	19.5

GENERAL RESULTS OF THE 1971 STUDY (1970-71 SCHOOL YEAR)

Responses to the 1971 study were received in usable form from 574 of the 1038 schools. This constitutes a usable return of 55 per cent.

On the basis of the results, it was shown that some speech course(s) is offered in 96 per cent of the responding schools. Three per cent of the schools include speech as a part of another course of study; 1 per cent offers no speech courses at all.

Twenty-five per cent of the schools offering speech courses require a course for all students. Thirty-seven per cent require it for some students; in 38 per cent of the schools, speech is not required for anyone.

Speech courses are offered under the auspices of the English Department in 27 per cent of the schools. There is an area with a Speech Department label in 27 per cent of the schools. The remaining institutions departmentalize whatever speech courses they offer under various labels.

The next area to be considered is that of the faculty. Seventy-six per cent of the schools employ one or more full-time teachers of speech courses. The average number per school is 2.49. There are 778 part-time teachers employed either as the only speech teachers or as a supplement to the full-time faculty in 64 per cent of the schools.

Of the 1858 teachers reported as teaching speech courses on either a full or part-time basis in the junior colleges, 72 per cent hold advanced degrees in some phase of that field. Of this total, 67 per cent hold MA/MS degrees and 5 per cent hold doctoral degrees. The remaining 28 per cent of the teachers either hold a graduate degree in another discipline (usually English) or have no advanced degree at all. The latter is the case in 90 schools.

For presentation at this Convention, the course offerings were analyzed and courses offered in over 30 per cent of the responding colleges are presented. In 1971, the situation is as follows:

Course Title	% Schools Offering	Av. No. Students/Section
Beginning Speech	.89	22.3
Oral Interpretation	.48	18.2
Intro. to Theatre	.46	22.0
Acting	.36	17.7
Play Production	.35	19.2
Adv. Public Speak.	.33	17.0
Debate	.31	16.0

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The author would like to express appreciation for assistance with this project to Dr. Larry L. Barker (academic advisor for the 1967 study), to Mr. Michael Kruger (computer program design and data processing), and to the Office of Research Administration, University of Missouri, St. Louis (grant to finance the 1971 study).

Further information regarding these studies may be requested by contacting the author:

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Author Abstract:

A Survey of Speech Education in United States Junior Colleges, Carolyn Roberts Planck, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

This investigation was designed to examine the current status of specific aspects of speech education in all two-year colleges in the United States that are members of the American Association of Junior Colleges. The study was stimulated by the increasing prominence of junior colleges in United States higher education and the lack of broad research in the area of junior college speech programs. The specific aspects of speech education with which this study was concerned were: (1) availability of speech courses, (2) departmentalization of speech courses, (3) specific speech courses available, and (4) instructional speech staff.

This descriptive study was conducted in two phases: Spring, 1967, and Spring, 1971. In both instances, questionnaires were mailed to all United States junior colleges listed in the current edition of the *Directory of the American Association of Junior Colleges*. Over 55 percent of the questionnaires were returned in usable form for both of the phases and were analyzed to yield normative data. The data were analyzed in terms of three major variables: (1) the geographical area in which the school was located, (2) the public or private nature of the school, and (3) the size of the school.

The data yielded for each study were analyzed separately as well as compared to note trends or changes during the four year lapse.